MEMORABILIA

IN THE LIFE OF

JEDIDIAH MORSE, D.D.

FORMERLY PASTOR OF THE

FIRST CHURCH IN CHARLESTOWN, MASS.

BY HIS SON,

SIDNEY E. MORSE,

OF NEW YORK.

BOSTON:

ARTHUR W. LOCKE AND COMPANY,

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The first Sabbath-school society in Massachusetts was formed in October, 1816, by the late Rev. Dr. Jedidiah Morse and members of the First Church in Charlestown, of which Dr. M. was then the pastor. Dr. Morse's eldest son, Samuel F. B. Morse, his second son, Sidney E. Morse, and the Rev. Dr. John Todd, of Pittsfield, Mass., all now living, were three of the first teachers of the first school established by this Society; and Mr. S. F. B. Morse was also the first superintendent of the school. These three surviving teachers were invited to attend and take part in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the school and of the society. The meeting for the celebration was held in the church of the First Parish in Charlestown, on the 14th of October, 1866. Dr. Todd was present, and delivered one of the addresses. Professor Morse could not attend, being absent at the time with his family in Europe. Mr. Sidney E. Morse wrote for the occasion the following letter, which is copied from a little volume published by the Society, containing a full account of the celebration.

MEMORABILIA.

LETTER OF SIDNEY E. MORSE, OF NEW YORK,

IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION TO ATTEND THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST SABBATH-SCHOOL SOCIETY IN MASSACHUSETTS.

New York, Oct. 12, 1866.

To Mr. S. B. Pratt, Charlestown, Mass.

My Dear Sir, — I regret that it will not be in my power to attend the meeting for the celebration of the Semi-centennial Anniversary of the First Sabbath-school Society in Massachusetts, to be held at Charlestown on the 14th inst. The names of the officers of the Society, and of the teachers of the schools, in 1816, in the printed paper enclosed in your letter, bring vividly before my mind persons and scenes to which I have had no special occasion to refer for nearly fifty years, and revive mingled feelings of pleasure and sadness.

I remember well the circumstances in which the Society and the schools originated. The merit of originating them belongs pre-eminently to the late Rev. Ward Stafford of New York. Sixty years ago, *Ward Stafford* was a poor farmer's boy in New Hampshire. Becoming hopefully pious, he was placed at Phillips Academy, in Andover, to be trained to the duties of a country schoolmaster. My younger brother, Richard, was at that time at the Andover Academy, preparing for admission to Yale College. Rooming with Stafford, highly appreciating his talents and Christian spirit, and earnestly desiring to extend his power of usefulness, my brother presented Stafford's case to my father, who at once

obtained the subscription of my uncle, the late Josiah Salisbury, deacon in the Old South Church in Boston, for four hundred dollars, and of other wealthy friends for three hundred dollars more; and with this money Mr. Stafford was educated at Yale College, where he was graduated in 1812 with the second honor in his class, delivering the salutatory oration on that occasion, although among his competitors for that honor were such men as the Hon. George Bliss of Springfield, and the late Hon. John Davis of Worcester, whose talents the people of Massachusetts have appreciated by bestowing upon them the highest offices in their gift.

After leaving New Haven, Mr. Stafford went to New York, and became a devoted missionary to the poor of that city, on a plan originated by himself, and set forth in a small work, entitled "A New Missionary Field," — a work which DeWitt Clinton, the great statesman of New York, pronounced "a masterly performance," and which prepared the way for the *City Missions*, now so generally established in this country and in Europe.

The class of poor with which Mr. Stafford specially occupied himself were the seamen of the port; and, in his labors for them, he founded the institutions which ripened into the *American Seamen's Friend Society*, whose influence for good is now felt throughout the world.

Mr. Stafford engaged also enthusiastically in the establishment of Sabbath schools in New York. In the autumn of 1816, he made a visit of several weeks to my father in Charlestown, and enlisted him in the Sabbath-school enterprise. At that time, good people in Massachusetts regarded Sabbath schools as fitted only for the children of the poor, in such cities as London and New York, where the ignorant and vicious parents neglected the religious education of their offspring, and where no adequate provision was made for secular instruction during the week. In Massachusetts, where ample provision was made by law for teaching every child to read and write on week-days, and where parents were presumed to devote a part of every Sabbath to the religious instruction of their children, Sabbath schools, it was thought, would be entirely out of place. Some of the best men that I saw at my father's at that time maintained that it would be actually a profa-

nation of the Sabbath to open a school on the Lord's Day, as it would be doing work on that holy day which the fourth commandment requires to be done on the other days of the week. My father, however, examined the matter carefully, with his characteristic perspicacity, and, as the result, became the founder of the *First Sabbath-school Society in Massachusetts.*

I see by your letter that you propose to have a portrait of my father over the desk in the church during the celebration. Perhaps, then, it may not be deemed obtrusive or inappropriate, if I here state succinctly some of the other enterprises for the promotion of the good of his fellow-men, of which he was either the originator or the efficient promoter.

Dr. Morse was born in Woodstock, Conn., on the 23d of August, 1761, and was graduated at Yale College in 1783. On leaving college, he opened a Young Ladies' School in New Haven; and, as no school geography had ever been printed in America at that time, he prepared one in manuscript, which was copied by his pupils, and in this way the study of geography was introduced into schools in this country. He then enlarged the work; and in March, 1784, it was printed in 18mo form in New Haven, and was the *First Geography ever printed on the American continent.* For fifteen or twenty years this work, in successive editions, was the text-book of geography in the common schools generally throughout the country.

Encouraged by the success of this small work, Dr. Morse, in the course of the next five years, travelled through every State in the Union, formed the acquaintance everywhere of men of the highest intelligence, opened a correspondence with them to obtain extensive, minute, and reliable geographical information; and, from materials thus procured, he prepared a full and complete description of the United States, which was published in an octavo volume in Elizabethtown, N.J., early in the year 1789, just before his installation as pastor of the Congregational Church in Charlestown. This *Octavo Geography* was immediately reprinted in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin: it was translated into French, and published in Paris; and into German, and published in Hamburg. It was, emphatically, the book from which, in its successive editions, Europeans, for twenty years, derived their chief knowledge of this coun-

try. It greatly promoted migration from Europe to America, and it led to a correspondence between my father and some of the most eminent men in the British Isles and on the continent of Europe.

Near the close of the last century, Dr. Jenner, in England, made his celebrated discovery of *Vaccination* as a preventive of small-pox. At first he was violently opposed in London by members of the medical profession, who would have branded him as a monster, seeking to bestialize the human species by introducing among men the diseases of the lower animals. There was also a strong feeling of repugnance to vaccination in this country; and when Dr. Waterhouse of Cambridge, in the autumn of 1800, imported vaccine matter from England, he reported to my father that he could not find persons willing to submit to the experiment. My father, who had probably been enlightened on the subject by Dr. Lettsom and other correspondents in London, invited Dr. W. to Charlestown, engaging to find him there fit subjects for his purpose. When Dr. W. arrived, my father went with him to Mrs. Henley's store on Main Street, and presented the case to S. V. S. Wilder, who was at that time a clerk in Mrs. Henley's employment. Young Wilder, having unbounded confidence in my father, at once stripped up his sleeve, and submitted to the operation. Dr. W. then returned to the parsonage, and vaccinated me and Richard, my younger brother. He had previously vaccinated a member of his own family, who had a poor constitution, and was in bad health; and we four, I have been taught, were the *first four persons vaccinated in America.* The three Charlestown boys had good constitutions, and were in fine health; and the virus from our arms, I suppose, was used to inoculate all of you of that day who were vaccinated after us.

In the autumn of 1801, Dr. Morse established a Saturday evening *Lecture for the Religious instruction of the Youth* of his parish, taking for his texts the answers to the questions in the Westminster Assembly's Catechism. This lecture was soon attended by more than two hundred young men; and in the autumns of 1802 and 1803, when it was renewed, by three hundred and four hundred; and it was kept up for several subsequent years with evident good effect, the persons added to my father's church during three years, at this period, having been more than one hundred.

Among the young men most prominent in promoting these gatherings was *Mr. S. V. S. Wilder*, to whom I have already alluded. My father was strongly attached to Mr. Wilder, and paid special attention to his religious instruction, inviting him to spend his Saturday evenings in his study, to commit there his Catechism and Bible lessons, while my father was engaged in writing his sermons for the Sabbath. The intimacy and friendship thus formed continued through life, and they often afterwards co-operated in the same enterprises; Mr. Wilder, as is well known, having been, like my father, an efficient promoter of numerous religious charitable societies, and especially of the American Tract Society, of which he was annually elected the president for the first sixteen years of its existence.

In 1802, an incident occurred which led my father to take a deep interest in *the welfare of the negroes*. One Saturday evening, as he was in his study, writing his sermon for the Sabbath, he was annoyed by loud cries and quarrelling in the street. Irritated at this interruption, he took his cane, and resolved (for a Congregational minister in Massachusetts was a man of authority in those days) to go out and disperse the rioters. On arriving at the scene of turmoil, he found it all arose from negroes, who were quarrelling with each other. His anger at once turned into pity. He calmly remonstrated with them, and they quietly dispersed. But his own mind was not quieted. He reproached himself for his neglect of this portion of his flock. "How can I wonder," he said, "that these poor men behave so, when they have never been trained to behave otherwise! We have given them liberty, but have not taught them to use their liberty for the benefit of themselves or others. We shut them out of our schools, and they are hardly welcome even in our churches. I, for one, am resolved to reform." Accordingly, he gave notice from the pulpit, that he should commence forthwith in the school-house a course of *Weekly Lectures to Colored People*. These lectures were kept up for two years or more, and were numerously attended by the most respectable negroes of Boston and the vicinity. They were followed by opening a subscription for a *School-house and Church for colored people in Boston*, Dr. Morse subscribing the sum of one hundred dollars; a large sum

at that time, for his salary in the early years of his ministry was but a little more than five hundred dollars per annum. These labors of Dr. Morse for their welfare greatly endeared him to the colored people in all that part of the Commonwealth; and, in every important matter which concerned them, they afterwards consulted him as their earliest influential friend. In 1808, when they were permitted to march in procession through the streets of Boston, in celebration of the *Abolition of the African Slave Trade* by the United States, Great Britain, and Denmark, Dr. Morse attended, by their invitation, and preached the sermon on the occasion. This sermon was printed, and is preserved in the library of Harvard College, and doubtless in other libraries in your vicinity.

When I returned home from college one vacation, I think it was in the year 1811, I found the hall of the parsonage crowded with negroes; and, when I asked what it meant, I was told that they were a deputation, composed of the most respectable colored people of Boston, who had come to consult Dr. Morse respecting a plan for *Colonizing American negroes in Africa*, which had been recommended by Paul Cuffee, a colored ship-owner of New Bedford. Mr. Cuffee had corresponded with the leading negroes in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, on the subject, and had offered all who inclined to go to Africa a free passage in his vessels. The Boston deputation wished Dr. Morse to use his influence with his London friends, to obtain permission for American negroes to go and settle in Sierra Leone, for the Americans at that time had no territory on the African coast; and they wished Dr. Morse to write also to his Washington friends to get the United-States Government to share in the expenses of the expedition. This project failed at the time, in consequence of the prospect, afterwards realized, of a war with Great Britain; but it was revived in 1815, when a company of colored people left Massachusetts for Sierra Leone, bearing with them a letter from Dr. Morse to Mr. Maxwell, the governor of the colony, commending them to his protection, with the assurance that he would find them a valuable addition to his colony, for they were chiefly pious, educated people, who carried with them their Bibles, hymn-books, religious tracts, and implements of industry. They carried also recommendations from gentlemen

in Boston, whose respectability was indorsed by Dr. Morse. This settlement of colored people from Massachusetts in Sierra Leone, in 1815, was the *First actual Colonization of American negroes in Africa*. The American Colonization Society had not then been formed, and the territory of Liberia was not purchased until several years afterwards.

The London *Religious Tract Society*, the great pioneer of similar institutions throughout the world, was established in 1799. The Rev. George Burder, its Secretary, was one of Dr. Morse's London correspondents, and supplied him with copies of its publications. In reflecting on the subject, Dr. Morse saw clearly that there were large districts in the United States, in which the religious wants of the people could be supplied more readily and appropriately by religious tracts than by any other means; and he immediately planned, and set in motion, the machinery by which this good end should be accomplished. In the fall of 1802, before any tract society had been formed in America, Dr. Morse selected nineteen religious tracts; procured fifty five reams of paper; printed the nineteen tracts in editions varying from six hundred to three thousand, making in all 32,600 tracts; had the greater part of them done up in assorted parcels of sixty tracts in a parcel, and sent two parcels to each one of one hundred and sixty towns in the district of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, making 19,200 tracts sent to Maine; and furnished upwards of 5,000 more for circulation in other places, but chiefly in Kentucky and Tennessee, where several efficient missionaries, with whom Dr. Morse was personally acquainted, were then laboring. The money expended in the publication of these 32,600 tracts, amounting to $571, was contributed chiefly by Dr. Morse's parishioners; Richard Devens alone giving $281, — nearly one-half. Among the other contributors in Charlestown were Miss Bradstreet, $8; Joseph Barrell, $5; Artemas Ward, $5; Thomas Kettell, $4; S. V. S. Wilder (then a clerk in Mrs. Henley's store), ten cents; and among those in Boston and elsewhere were Dr. Lathrop, $20; Mrs. Codman, $18; Lieut.-governor Robbins, $14; Deacon Salisbury, $10; Rev. Mr. Greenough, $10; Dr. Kirkland, $6. Dr. Morse himself seems to have given $119; for all the subscriptions amount to only $452,

while the expenses were $571. There can be little doubt, I think, that, in 1802, the pastor and people of the First Parish in Charlestown had done more in circulating religious tracts among the poor and destitute in the United States than any other people in New England; for at that time, I repeat, there was no tract society in the land, and I never heard of an individual engaging in the work with an enthusiasm approaching that of my father. The work thus begun was followed up till it ended in the establishment, first of the *New-England Tract Society*, and afterwards of the *American Tract Society*.

Dr. Morse, from the commencement of his ministry, engaged earnestly in efforts for the *spread of the Bible*. Prior to the formation of any Bible society in America or Europe, he co-operated with his munificent parishioner, David Devens, and with other individuals, in distributing Bibles and Testaments, as well as religious tracts, in the newly-settled parts of our country.

The era of *Bible Societies* commenced with the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. The American Bible Society was not formed until 1816. Prior to 1816, the work of printing and distributing Bibles in America was performed by individuals and by local societies. The first local Bible society in America was that of Philadelphia, formed in 1808. In the summer of 1810, the whole number of Bible societies in the United States was only 11; viz., 3 in Massachusetts, 1 in Connecticut, 2 in New York, 1 in New Jersey, 1 in Pennsylvania, 2 in South Carolina, and 1 in Georgia. That South Carolina and Georgia had 3 out of the 11 Bible societies is explained by the fact that Dr. Morse was compelled, for the benefit of his health, to spend the winter of 1809 – 10 in those States, and that he there, as a voluntary unpaid agent, engaged in the labors which led to the formation of the Georgia Bible Society at Savannah, and of the Charleston and Beaufort Bible Societies in South Carolina. The Bible society of Beaufort, formed in March 1810, when my father was there on a visit to a relative, contributed, as its first offering to the Bible cause, the sum of seven hundred dollars, although the whole population of the place, white and black, at that time was less than 1,000!

The *American Bible Society* was formed by a convention which met in New York in 1816. Dr. Morse was a member of that convention, and was one of the committee of eleven appointed to frame its Constitution and its Address to the public.

"*A Compendious History of New-England*," written by my father, and his friend, the Rev. Dr. Parish, in a style adapted to the capacities of students of the higher classes in common schools, and intended as a school-book, to excite in the minds of New-England youth admiration of the virtues of their Puritan ancestors, was first published in September, 1804, and met at once with remarkable success; the greater part of a large edition having been sold in the course of a few weeks after it was issued. The further sale of this work, and the good which it was calculated to do, were defeated, however, by the utterly groundless charge, that, in preparing and publishing it, Dr. Morse had violated the rights, as an author, of Miss Hannah Adams,* who had published in 1799 "A Summary His-

* This charge of violating the rights of Miss Adams, as an author, was made so boldly, reiterated for years so persistently, and countenanced so extensively, by Unitarians of the higher classes in society, that it affected my father deeply and disastrously, in his property, in his pastoral and social relations, and in other relations intimately connected with his happiness and his usefulness. His influence in Boston and its vicinity was indeed, to a great extent, destroyed by it. The charge was met at last, as it should have been at first, by *an examination and comparison of the two works*. When this was done, it was manifest at once that they differed so widely in object, plan, style, size, price, subdivisions of the general subject, and space devoted to each subdivision, that there could be no improper resemblance or interference. But the most important result of this examination was the discovery of the astounding fact, that Miss Adams, when she lent her name to the enemies of Dr. Morse, to destroy his reputation, on the *false* charge of violating her rights as an author, was herself guilty, and must have been all the while conscious that she was guilty, of a *real* and gross violation of the rights of another author; *she having copied verbatim, or with only colorable alterations, nearly one third of her whole work, one hundred and sixty out of five hundred and thirteen pages, from Dr. Ramsay's History of the American Revolution!* After the publication of this fact, Miss A. and her instigators became at once totally silent, and continued so during the remainder of my father's life, more than twelve years.

I have recently compared carefully the two histories; and, if Drs. Morse and Parish were indebted to Miss Adams for *a single fact* in their "Compendious History," I have not been able to find it. It is true that Miss Adams is referred to as an authority, in the "Compendious History," *four* times; but, in every one of the four cases, the credit should have been given, not to Miss Adams, but to the authors from whom she copied. Dr. Parish explained this in a letter

tory of New England," many copies of which, in 1804, were still unsold.

In February, 1805, the great *Revolution in the religious character of Harvard College* was effected by the election of the Rev. Dr. Ware, a Unitarian, to fill the chair of Hollis Professor of Divinity, vacated by the death of the Rev. Dr. Tappan. A newspaper controversy on the subject, in which Dr. Morse took a prominent part, commenced in the fall of 1804; but the first decisive act of revolution was on the 14th of February, 1805. Dr. Morse, as member of the Board of Overseers of the College, opposed the election of Dr. Ware, on the ground that Mr. Hollis, in his statutes, required that his professor should be a man "of sound or orthodox principles," and had even exacted from the Corporation of the College, in 1725, a formal deed, binding "themselves and their successors, in all time coming," to a faithful discharge of the trust reposed in them. Dr. Morse maintained, that as Dr. Ware was not orthodox, in the sense evidently intended by Mr. Hollis, it would be a violation of their trust to elect him to the professorship. Although unsuccessful in his opposition to the election, my father, when attacked, continued, courteously but firmly, to hold his position; and, when his conduct was misrepresented in the newspapers and elsewhere, he published his celebrated pamphlet, entitled "*The True Reasons* on which the election of Hollis Professor of Divinity in Harvard College was opposed at the Board of Overseers."

Dr. Ware was elected in February, 1805. In March was published "The True Reasons," referred to above; and early in April, less than two months from the date of the election, my father issued proposals for the publication of "*The Panoplist*," a monthly religious magazine, which was intended, as its name imports, to aid the orthodox churches of New England in the struggle with Unitarianism, which had then fairly commenced. The first number of "The Panoplist" appeared in June, 1805. For six months, Dr. Morse was not

to Miss Adams, in which he told her, that he wrote her name as an authority, when he knew that "it would have been more exact to have inserted another name; but this I did," he said, "to show my respect for you, and to keep your book in view." So that, really, the only wrong done by either of the compilers of the "Compendious History" to other authors was the wrong done by Dr. Parish to Chalmers, Hutchinson, Neal, and Trumbull, in giving credit due them to Miss Adams, for the purpose of promoting the sale of her book!

only its sole editor, but its sole proprietor and publisher; and it flourished under his vigorous administration, so that in August, only two months after it was commenced, it had attained to a greater circulation than that of any contemporary monthly periodical in New England. Dr. M. remained the sole proprietor of "The Panoplist" for three years, and its sole responsible conductor for more than four years. The editorship was then transferred to the late Jeremiah Evarts, Esq., under whose able management it continued for ten years more to render invaluable service to the cause of evangelical religion.

Another fruit of the revolution in Harvard College was *the Andover Theological Seminary*. In June, 1805, Mr. Samuel Abbot, by a codicil to his will, diverted the money which he had bequeathed to Harvard College to the establishment of a Professorship of Divinity, either in Phillips Academy or in a college to be instituted in Andover. In March, 1806, the Rev. Dr. Pearson, the most efficient officer in Harvard College, resigned his professorship, and labored with my father, and others, for the establishment of a seminary at Andover. After two years, their labors were completely successful; and, in the fall of 1808, the institution was formally opened for the reception of students. For a full account of the agency of my father in the establishment of the Andover Theological Seminary, I must refer you to his forthcoming Biography.

The *American Board of Foreign Missions* was one of the fruits of the Andover Theological Seminary. It originated in June, 1810, in a memorial addressed to the Massachusetts General Association by four students of that seminary, who desired to spend their lives in preaching the gospel to the heathen. Before its incorporation by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1812, the Board consisted of eight members, — four from Massachusetts and four from Connecticut, — and Dr. Morse was one of the four from Massachusetts. It was on the petition of Drs. Morse and Worcester that the act of incorporation was granted. This act names seven out of the eleven persons who constituted the Board at that date; and Dr. Morse was one of the seven. He was a member of the Prudential Committee from 1815 to 1821, a year after his removal from Charlestown to New Haven. For an account of other services rendered to the Board,

and to the cause of missions to the heathen, I refer again to the Biography.

In 1811, my elder brother, *Samuel F. B. Morse*, having manifested an unconquerable desire to become an artist, my father sent him to London, placed him in the British Royal Academy, then under the presidency of our countryman, Benjamin West, and maintained him there for more than four years, and until the close of 1815, when he returned to Charlestown, after having received, from the hand of the Duke of Norfolk, the gold medal of the Adelphi Society for his model of a statue of "The Dying Hercules," his first attempt at sculpture; and from Mr. West high commendations for his paintings, exhibited at the Royal Academy under circumstances which did not allow his competition for the prizes.

In 1816, my brother became the first superintendent of your Sabbath school, and was then proposing to establish himself in his profession in Boston; but, not meeting with the encouragement he expected, he removed first to New Haven, and afterwards to New York, where he became the founder of *The National Academy of Design*, an institution, which, from its commencement in 1826, has had no superior of its kind in America in the promotion of the Fine Arts, and over which your first superintendent was called to preside, by the annual election of his brother artists, every year for sixteen years, and until he relinquished his profession to devote himself entirely to his *Electric Telegraph*, "the lines of which," since they were successfully laid between Washington and Baltimore in 1844, have literally "gone out through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world."

Prior to the relinquishment of his profession as a painter, however, your first superintendent was the instrument, in the hand of Providence, of introducing into this country that great (I may say that greatest) wonder of our age, the new *Art of Photography*. Photography, under the name of the Daguerreotype, it is well known, was invented by the celebrated Daguerre, a French artist, who exhibited his first collection of specimens to the members of the French Academy of Sciences, in Paris, early in the year 1839. My brother was in Paris at the same time, exhibiting his telegraph to the same persons. Brother artists and brother inventors, thus

brought together, each was invited to examine the other's invention; and my brother became earnest in his desire to introduce the Daguerreotype into America. On his return to New York, in April, 1839, he inspired me and my younger brother with a portion of his own enthusiasm. He was then entirely destitute of pecuniary means; and, after ascertaining what was wanted to enable him to gratify his and our wishes, we removed the central part of the roof of our six-story building, No. 140, Nassau Street, added a seventh story to this part of the building, covered it with a sky-light, furnished the new chamber with cameras and the other apparatus of photography, and, having thus completed the first "tabernacle for the sun" erected on the Western hemisphere, placed your first superintendent there to fix, for inspection through all time, the perfect images of men and things, as the great Painter, from his tabernacle in the heavens, flashed them upon the silvered plates. It was in that chamber that he, who first practiced the art of training in your Sabbath school, in 1816, trained the young men who went forth rejoicing, from New York into every part of our land, to work the wonders, and display the beauties, of the new art, eliciting admiration from all beholders, and from the devout the exclamation, which, four years afterwards, passed in an instant through the wire from Washington to Baltimore, to be recorded there, while it was echoed everywhere, "What hath God wrought!" * the two swift messengers of heaven, the Light and the Lightning, having then both been trained to stop, and stamp in durable characters their declaration of the glory of God, — a declaration, not spoken, and yet speaking to the eye, to the thoughts, to the heart, in language more eloquent than the tongue can utter, telling us that the Sun and the Moon and the Stars are now sending their joyous Light to join with Man, and with every creature in heaven, and on the earth and in the sea, in ascribing Blessing and honor and glory and power to HIM that sitteth on the throne, and to the LAMB, forever and ever.

In 1815, Dr. Morse prepared for publication *the famous pamphlet*

* It may not be known to all readers that the first message sent by the inventor of the Recording Telegraph, through his first telegraph line, on its completion from Washington to Baltimore in 1844, was, "What hath God wrought!"

entitled "*American Unitarianism*," in which it was proved from the letters of American Unitarians themselves, published in Belsham's "Life of Lindsey," that many of the Congregational ministers of Boston and the vicinity were Unitarians; and Dr. Morse thus relieved himself from the odious charge, under which he had long suffered, of being "a false accuser" of his ministerial brethren, because he called them Unitarians.

"*The Boston Recorder*," the prototype of that numerous class of periodicals called *religious newspapers*, now established in every part of Protestant Christendom, was commenced in January, 1816. A new weekly newspaper in Boston at that time was a natural consequence of the publication of the pamphlet alluded to in the preceding paragraph. The effect of the pamphlet entitled "American Unitarianism" was an open avowal of their sentiments by Unitarians, and a division of Congregationalists in the eastern half of New England into two religious parties. "The wealth, talent, and influence of Boston," were chiefly with the Unitarians; and the newspaper proprietors in that city were universally in their interest. When the professors at Andover and their associates, after the line had been drawn between the two parties, wished to circulate appeals to the public on the desecration of the Sabbath, they were told that "not a newspaper in Boston would publish them." These gentlemen then consulted with Dr. Morse, Mr. Evarts, and others, and resolved that a new weekly newspaper should be established in Boston.

Application was made to me, then a student in the Law-school at Litchfield in Connecticut, to become the editor of the proposed paper. I declined, on the ground that I was incompetent, without a proper training, to discharge the duties of the place.* The reply was, that Mr. Evarts, editor of "The Panoplist," would be the senior editor of the new paper, and would train me. I then consented, with the understanding, however, that my father, who had

* When this application was made to me I was only twenty-one years old. I had, however, been, for several years, a writer for "The Boston Centinel," of articles which had been extensively copied into other papers throughout the country. A series of twelve anonymous articles, which I wrote in 1812–13, was copied from "The Centinel" into every other Federal newspaper in Boston. This was known to the gentlemen who proposed the establishment of a new paper, and hence, probably, the application to me.

begun to suffer seriously in his property from the persecution of his enemies, should not be allowed to incur any pecuniary responsibility, except for my personal expenses. This point, it was supposed, was effectually secured by the agreement of Mr. Nathaniel Willis to print and publish the new paper for me, at fixed prices for paper, printing, and clerk-hire, all the receipts from subscribers and advertisers to be retained by him until his bill should be fully paid, but neither I nor my father to be responsible in case of a deficiency. Mr. Willis was induced to make this agreement by the expectation of securing to himself steady occupation as a printer.

In October, 1815, after consulting with my father and Mr. Evarts, and availing myself of their suggestions, I wrote and issued the prospectus of "The Recorder," a weekly newspaper, on an original plan, to be commenced on the first Wednesday in January, 1816. Mr. Willis estimated that 950 subscribers would pay his bill if the edition should consist of only 1,000 copies. When the day for commencing the publication arrived, there were only 500 subscribers, and Mr. Evarts gave me notice that he could not occupy the post of senior editor. I also wished to retire; but my father said that I must go on as sole editor. At the end of three weeks, there had been few additions to the list, and Mr. Willis gave me notice that the fourth number was the last that he would print under the existing arrangement. I reported what Mr. Willis said to my father, and expressed my earnest wish that the whole undertaking might be abandoned. In that dark hour of "The Recorder's" history not an offer of pecuniary aid was made by any of those, in Boston or elsewhere, who had before been forward in avowing themselves the warm friends and patrons of the paper. No cordial sympathy, no deep interest, no such feeling as I looked for from those who, before and afterwards, were spoken of as the originators of the paper, and who had invited me to abandon my profession to edit it, was then manifested at Andover. No one *then*, anywhere, was disposed to contend for the honor of the paternity of "The Boston Recorder." The poor foundling was believed by all to be dead, and they left it at Dr. Morse's door to be buried.

When I reported to my father that Mr. Willis declined printing the paper any longer, and that I too wished to abandon it, he said that the paper should not be abandoned, that he *would* now, him-

self, become personally responsible for all expenses, and would employ another printer and publisher. Accordingly he engaged Mr. Ezra Lincoln to print "The Recorder" for three months, and then went to work in his energetic way to get subscribers. In about two months the list advanced, under my father's efforts, from 500 to 800. Mr. David J. Burr had then removed from Richmond in Virginia to Boston, and, having purchased Mr. S. T. Armstrong's book-establishment, desired to enter into partnership with me in "The Recorder." I consented, throwing upon him half the pecuniary responsibility and all the mercantile cares; and when the contract with Mr. Lincoln expired, as Mr. Willis and his friends desired that he should be taken back as printer, Mr. Burr and I consented, and entered into a written contract with him, which I still retain. My partnership with Mr. Burr, after continuing less than three months, was dissolved, in consequence of his return from Boston to Richmond. My father continued his exertions; and, before the end of June, the list of subscribers had advanced to 1,100, which was more than sufficient to pay all the expenses of paper, printing, rent, and clerk-hire.

Thus far the Andover gentlemen had made little effort to sustain "The Recorder." They avowed their wish to secure to themselves the control of the paper, to prevent its falling into improper hands, and were unwilling to engage zealously in the work until this had been effected. Through their influence over the young men in the Theological Seminary, I supposed they had the power to give a great impulse to the circulation of the paper; and I therefore proposed to constitute the Rev. Dr. Worcester of Salem, with Rev. Dr. Edwards and Samuel Farrar, Esq., of Andover, a Board of Trustees, and to give them a deed, binding me, and my successors in the proprietorship, to confine the editorship of "The Recorder" to persons who should be approved by them and their successors in the Board. At the same time, as I wished to be entirely free from mercantile cares, I proposed to Mr. Willis to make him the proprietor of the paper, reserving to myself one dollar annually on every subscriber upon the list over 950, and the whole editorial control of the paper, not allowing Mr. Willis, although called proprietor, to insert even an advertisement which I might deem exceptionable. Both these propositions were accepted; and the writings were ex-

ecuted simultaneously, or nearly so, Mr. Willis uniting with me in the bond to this Board of Trustees.

I was disappointed in the effect of the bond on the subscription. My father, trusting to it, relaxed his efforts; and, at the end of the year, the subscription list had advanced only to 1,300. This indeed, I was told, was a greater number than that on the list of any other newspaper in Boston at that time, except "The Centinel;" but it would have yielded me, under my arrangement with Mr. Willis, only $350. No doubt, with proper efforts, the number of subscribers could easily have been doubled in the course of another year; for the plan was very popular, twenty country newspapers, in different parts of the Union, during the year 1816, having adopted it, and become religious newspapers, by devoting, each, several columns every week to religious intelligence. With the subscription doubled, my compensation would have been increased more than fourfold.

My first year's experience as an editor, however, had excited in me an enthusiastic desire to carry out my plan of a religious newspaper more perfectly, and on a larger scale, than would have been possible in Boston. I resolved, therefore, to go and attempt to execute it where I should not only be unfettered, but where all the leading religious denominations were evangelical, and all their leading men would give me a cordial and generous support. Accordingly, in December, 1816, I communicated my plan in a letter to Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher of Connecticut, who responded in terms of extravagant eulogy of me and my plan, and with the assurance that all the leading clergymen and laymen of his acquaintance would engage zealously in aiding me in the execution of it. Circumstances prevented the immediate execution of this plan. A few years afterwards, however, I and my younger brother, Richard C. Morse, went by invitation to the city of New York, and established there, with the hearty co-operation of the clergymen and leading laymen of all evangelical denominations, "*The New-York Observer.*" Every prior attempt to establish a religious newspaper in the State of New York had failed; but "The New-York Observer" having met with remarkable success, and the city of New York becoming soon after, instead of Boston, the centre of operation of the great religious charitable societies of the United

States, almost every religious denomination in the land then established there its newspaper organ, devoted specially to the interests of that denomination, while "The New-York Observer," which continued to be conducted on its original evangelical Catholic basis, was still for a time the most widely-circulated religious newspaper in the land or in the world. Its number of subscribers, after it had been established a few years, was two or three fold that of "The Boston Recorder," which continued to be the leading religious newspaper of New England.

The *Paris Tract Society* was formed in 1818, the *Paris Bible Society* in 1819, and the *Paris Missionary Society* in 1822. It is stated in the "Records of the late S. V. S. Wilder," published by the American Tract Society, New York, that these French societies owed their being to a letter of introduction which Dr. Morse gave Mr. Wilder to the famous Prince Talleyrand, who, when traveling in America, had been hospitably entertained by Dr. Morse, and some of his principal parishioners, in Charlestown. The laws of France, forbidding assemblages for the purpose contemplated by these societies, were in 1818, and the years immediately subsequent, strictly enforced against "the hated English;" but Mr. Wilder, under the protection of Talleyrand, a protection granted in consequence of the letter mentioned above, was encouraged to invite the founders of these societies to hold their meetings for organization in his private apartments, and there they were held without interruption from the police. The Bible enjoins it upon us not to be forgetful to entertain strangers, for unexpected good may come as the reward of our hospitality. Dr. Morse and his parishioners doubtless little expected when they were entertaining Prince Talleyrand in their houses in Charlestown, at the close of the last century, that they were thus preparing the way, under Providence, for the spread of the Bible and evangelical religion in one of the most populous and powerful empires in the world.

In February, 1820, Dr. Morse resigned his charge as pastor of the First Church in Charlestown, which he had held for more than thirty years; and, in the same month, was appointed by President Monroe *Agent of the United-States government, to visit all the Indian tribes in the neighborhood of white settlements within the United States.* He was instructed to acquire a thorough knowledge of the

actual condition of these Indians, and to devise and report a plan for the promotion of their civilization and welfare. The summers of 1820 and 1821 were devoted to journeys in furtherance of the objects of this commission; and, in 1822, the results, together with the results of all his reading and study of the subject, were given in a closely-printed octavo volume of 500 pages, embodying, in a condensed form, a large amount of valuable information respecting this interesting portion of our population.

Dr. Morse's plan for civilizing the Indians, and promoting their highest welfare, was, to cede to the remnants of tribes, in exchange for their several reservations in different parts of the Union, a suitable, compact, central Territory; to use all legitimate means to induce the Indians to remove thither, and devote themselves there to agriculture and the useful arts; to encourage Christian benevolent societies to establish schools and support missionaries among them; and, finally, after a proper political training, under a local government of their own, to admit them to the privileges of a representation in the General Government of the United States. These views seem to have been adopted, to a considerable extent, by Congress, in the subsequent establishment of *The Indian Territory* on the Arkansas River and its branches, between the States of Texas, Arkansas, and Kansas.

It was while Dr. Morse was at Green Bay, in the summer of 1820, that he made the discovery of the villainy of a United-States Agent, who had made *a fraudulent treaty with the Menominee Indians*, by which they ceded to the United States their large and beautiful country on the Fox River, for a paltry annuity of eight hundred dollars. On the representation of the case by Dr. Morse to President Monroe, this fraudulent treaty was set aside, the President refusing to submit it to the Senate for ratification; and thus not only was their country preserved to the Menominees, but the reputation of our own country, and of our republican institutions, was saved from a stain which could never have been effaced.

For further information relating to Dr. Morse's labors in the cause of the Indians, I refer to a letter of my younger brother inserted in his Biography, and to the volume, above referred to, prepared by Dr. Morse himself.

After his visits to the Indian tribes, Dr. Morse retired to his quiet and pleasant home in the beautiful semi-rural city of New Haven, in Connecticut, his native State. There he resided during the remainder of his life, in the midst of a highly cultivated, intelligent, and Christian community, the leading members of which, men of world-wide literary and scientific fame, and of religious sentiments in harmony with his own, were his daily companions; while all, of all classes, loved and honored him for the services he had rendered to his country and to mankind.

In the *near prospect of death*, my father was even more buoyant, hopeful, and joyous, than in the midst of life and health. For him, death had no terrors, and the grave no gloom. They were to him the portals of heaven. Death, as he viewed it, was the gate through which he must pass on his way to a new and nobler life. Mors janua vitæ. Resurgam. CHRIST *is* THE RESURRECTION *and* THE LIFE. "I have a hope full of immortality, — *that* expresses it," — was his response to my elder brother, who arrived from New York in season to hear and record his last words. To my brother's question, "Have you any doubt of the truth of the doctrines you have preached?" he replied, "Oh, no! they are the doctrines of the Bible;" and, alluding to my brother's remark, "The Saviour, whose honor you have defended, will not now desert you," he said, "Oh, no! he gives me a foretaste of heaven. I have not strength to express what I feel."

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileged beyond the common walk
> Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

It was not my privilege to be in that chamber when my father died. I was too late. When I arrived, his sun had set; but its golden light still radiated from the sky, tempering, with its beams of hope and joy, the sorrow of those who had gathered around his bed to witness the hallowed scene. I joined in the prayer which rose from every heart, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Yours, truly,

SIDNEY E. MORSE.